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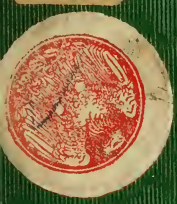

WINTER OF THE HEART

AND OTHER POEMS

ZAVARR WILMSHURST.

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THE

WINTER OF THE HEART,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

ZAVARR WILMSHURST.

"*Medio de fonte leporum,*
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat."—
LUCRETIUS.

NEW YORK:
DODD & MEAD, PUBLISHERS,
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This Little Volume

Is respectfully inscribed to the Chief of American Bards,

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW,

the melody of whose verse and the beauty of whose thoughts
are a source of pure delight and noble inspiration
to all who speak or understand the
English Language.

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THE WINTER OF THE HEART.

TO THE SUN.

"Me, nec femina, nec puer
Jam, nec spes animi credula mutui,
Nec certare juvat mero;
Nec vincire novis tempora floribus."—Hor.

I COME to thy brightness of rising,
Thou god of this morning of Spring,
While the clouds are with pennons disguising
Thy steps, O majestical king!
I come while thy brightness is lowly,
Long ere its intolerant noon,
While the heat of thy gold wings spreads slowly,
To ask a heart coveted boon.

Three weeks or four hardly have fleeted
Since all was most desolate here,
And old mother Earth was o'ersheeted
With snow, like a maid on her bier:
In the grove not a carol was chaunted,
But keen blasts hoarse elegies sung,
By the birds were the branches unhaunted,
Where long-fingered icicles clung.

The face of the sky was o'er-leadened
And dull as the arch of a tomb;
Thy children, the rays, were half deadened
As if thou wert wedded to gloom:
The world looked grim, spectral and hoary,
And Death seemed its tyrant and king,
When bursting thy chamber in glory,
We hailed thee,—the bridegroom of Spring.

An exquisite miracle sweeping
Earth's shroud, like a vision, away,
Woke Spring from her long deathly sleeping,
And clad her in bridal array:
She met thee with veil and adorning
Of blue and faint stars and dim moon,
Which faded, like ghosts, from the morning
As the birds crowed and warbled their tune.

The fringe of her veil was disordered
With clouds set on fire by thy light;
Her emerald skirt was embroidered
With flowers and the dew gems of night:

A music betokened her gladness,
A sweetness was spread by her bloom,
Which cured with its balm even madness
And the death-marked reprieved from their doom.

An Eden of beauty is started
As fresh as a miracle's birth,
As though the deep zenith had parted
To let down the heavens to earth:
The blue dyes are angels' eyes beaming;
Each leaf clothes the soul of an elf:
All live and grow young from thy streaming
Of light and of love—save myself.

I make not rash Phaëthon's prayer
For the glory of mounting thy place,
For the diamond mines or a layer
Of the gold that envisors thy face;
Yet I who am twin to hard weather,
And wore out the sharpness of strife,
With Nature should enter together
This world-wide unfolding of life.

Care deeply my forehead has wrinkled
As ivory smooth in my prime;
With silver my hair is besprinkled
By the liberal fingers of Time;
The spring and the force of my being
Are cramped by their prison's decay;
It rusts out my vigor for fleeing
While the bars wear so slowly away.

These marks do not favor the Graces,
Nor give me their elegant air,
But never have honester traces
Been left by too diligent care:
They show that I faced the fierce rattle,
And wooed the tumultuous brunt
With the brave and the strong in life's battle
Whom duty detailed to the front.

They show that I scorned any slighting
Of the work in my duty set down;
That conquest was won by hard fighting
And the cross was endured for the crown:

I ask not the magic removal
  Of the scars of my toil and my love
That claim the Great Captain's approval,—
  A veteran's honor above.

I know they will deepen and cluster
  With the beat of mortality's breath,
Till swept in the dust at the muster,
  The final grand muster of Death,
As the soul through his portals escaping,
  This frame to corruption bequeathes
And takes on the glorious shaping
  Of the love and the truth that it breathes.

But dark in my spirit declining
  The shadows of hopelessness lurk,
And born of Disgust and Repining,
  The vulture Decay is at work:
They blight the morn's loveliness springing
  To the light and the glow of thy kiss—
Oh, fright the foul crew into winging
  Their way to Night's deepest abyss!

The gall my heart burst on beholding
The gods of my friendship decline,
For wealth and its tinsel enfolding,
The grandeur of being divine,—
Of standing for truth, like the mountain
No clouds can dissever from day,—
Embitters my life at its fountain,
And turns all my soul into clay.

They made a most miserly barter
To go from the weak to the strong:
I have not a claim as a martyr,
But a demon-like hatred of wrong,
And love for the good and the kindly,
Which, spurning all limit and check
And worshipping darlings too blindly,
Has rendered my being a wreck.

The dear ones too closely were clinging,
My hands were too full and my heart
An anguish too keenly was wringing,
To practice the tactics of art:

Who fights with each passionate feeling
His love and his hate can enroll
Is wounded too sorely for healing
In the tenderest depths of his soul :

Like dust are its treasures all scattered,
Its friendships with mirage betrayed ;
Its idols of love are all shattered,
Their shrines all so desolate laid
That the blankness of bareness they offer
To the look and the search of despair,
As freezes the late rifled coffer
The miser in petrified stare.

Why should I rehearse the sad sequel,—
Why trace where emotion was whirled,
In contest so dread and unequal
Of the fond heart against the false world ?
For the gems of the heart which had wrested
My duty wellnigh from my God,
By the fire of adversity tested,
Proved base as the commonest clod.

The beauty from squalor exalted,
By loving devotion and care,
'Gainst the chains of my worship revolted
And wedded a vile millionaire:
The friend I delighted to cherish,
Whom life and life's comforts I gave,
Left me in a prison to perish,
And plotted to make it my grave.

Yet deem not, O Sun, my great sorrow
So base of descent and of soul
As being of creatures to borrow
That crawl through their life like a mole:
We fall into errors of vision,
While the spirit in clay is encased,
But look on our dreams with derision
In the sun-blight of experience placed.

The loving and gentle and truthful
Are the source of my grieving and pain:
I ask if the Heavens are ruthful
That see them snared, tortured and slain:

To the pure even death is salvation
That shuts out pollution and hate,
The mining of constant temptation
And the force of the evil and great.

Oh, tell me of beings of sweetness,
First chaste as the moon's kiss on snow,
Who yielding to love's dear repleteness,
Gave bliss more than angels bestow,—
Who fought against Sin in a fever
That burned up whole years in a day,
While she made their goodness her lever,
Their virtues a trap for her prey,—

How treachery these (more devoted,
More loving than seraphs) could whelm
In the gulf of perdition unnoted
Of Infinite Love at the helm:—
For the mystery poisons existence,
Like upas in paradise grown,
And makes even Honor's persistence
Seem idle as dreams that are flown.

Was the pearl of all women not Alice,
Whose virtue by kindliness won,
And melted the hardness of malice
As icicles weep to the sun?
Heaven's beauty was Heaven's commission
To bless and to purify all,
Yet the want of cold selfish suspicion
Was the cause of her ruin and fall.

Far distant, when Sin's creeping blackness
Stole on her and yawned to engulf,
And angels in envy showed slackness
That left her a prey to the wolf,
I learned not her fate till the waters
Forever had closed o'er her head,
And the sweetest of earth's loving daughters
To Death's dark asylum had fled.

The earthquake I felt on receiving
The death of the beauty of worth,
Arrested the pulse of believing
In the justice of Heaven and earth,

And, ghost-like, I linger unable
The grave of my hopes to forsake,
And haunt it with purpose unstable,
I neither accomplish nor break.

Yes, Spring has resumed her full glory
And Beauty her myriad thrones,
And birds fill the skies with their story,
And the brook makes a harp of its stones;
With fairy-like rainbows the flowers
The soul of life's sweetness impart,
Yet I am all dead to thy powers,
For winter is still at my heart.

It sleeps on my heart with oppression,
Like snow on the mountainous spire,
Maintaining eternal possession
Right under the flood of thy fire:
It shames thee and mocks all reliance
On the might that has built up thy fame;
Then melt me this icy defiance
With the magic that lives in thy flame.

Let springtide that blossoms abundance
And buds o'er yon age-withered tree,
Spare some of this vital redundance,
A spark of this freshness for me;
Let the spell of its breathing restore me
The faith and illusion of youth
Which placed Bliss and Beauty before me
As brides of the Future and Truth.

Great Sun, let me go as thou goest,
When Eve falls in tears from the stars,
And melted to softness thou flowest
In gold through the West's ruddy bars:
Like thee, in my set, I would waken
The Past with her tenderest hues
As love a sere grave long forsaken
With weeping and flowers renews.

From thee I would part with devotion
As god of the seasons below;
From Earth with that hallowed emotion
A son for a mother should show;

From all of her children with feeling
In the wreck of my spirit still warm,
And rise to my Maker revealing
A haven eternal from storm.

EVE:

OR,

THE BREAKERS' SPORT.

"Alas, poor world, what treasure hast thou lost!"
—SHAKESPEARE.

FOR miles I hear the breakers' roar
Before I reach the rocky shore
To witness their wild sport,
Their tossing rage, their ceaseless shout,
Their foaming charge, their shattered rout,
Succeeding each report
Of thunder.

My heart interprets their deep tone
And sinks in terror at the moan
Still floating from afar:
It seems to say: "We battle here
Against the one you hold most dear
Who in the ruthless war
Goes under."

What friend have I upon the sea,
Who is so near, so dear to me
That I should sink or sigh?
I hasten on yet fear to reach
The stretch and riot of the beach
Forever sounding nigh
And nigher.

At last it breaks upon my sight
In all its fierce and toiling might,
That foaming, dancing sea;
Like madmen raging are the waves,
As though sea-serpents hid in caves,
Rocked it eternally
Still higher.

Why should this billowing, seething war
Which seems the solid cliff to jar
Still shake my soul with fear?
Has it not battered thus in vain
All day and night, in shine and rain,
Some hundred million years
Already.

How idle is the white-wreathed rage
Like lion ramping in a cage,
The gazers sport and jest!
Upon this everlasting rock,
The crested fury I can mock
And in defiance rest
Heart-steady.

Still rises hoarse, as from a grave,
Or spirit sunk too far to save
Terror I cannot still:
Do all the voices of the dead,
Who in the deep have made their bed,
The air with murmurs fill
So dreary?

But what is that the breakers toss,
Like some fair flower torn with its moss
From a bright streamlet's side?
From wave to rock dashed to and fro,
With many a hard and bruising blow,
It rocks upon the tide
Ne'er weary.

Great God! it is a human form,
A victim of the ocean storm,
Thus racked upon the brine!
As I—thrilled through—intently mark
Its slender limbs, so white and stark,
I tremble to divine
The story.

A woman's shape I cannot doubt
The yeasty waves thus spurn and flout,
But never, even in dreams,
Deemed I that head, save Eve's, could wear
Such length and wealth of golden hair
As round that body streams
Like glory.

I dart, like lightning, down the crag,
And from the boiling waters drag,
Their unresisting prey;
I bear her from the buffets free
The clasping surge and saucy glee
Which make such heartless play
With beauty.

All doubt is gone, for there she lies,
With ashy cheek and soulless eyes,
Through which Death gazes cold:
Each long, salt, languid, yellow tress
Her listless, lavish loveliness
Doth weepingly enfold
In duty.

Still round her neck with serpent turn
Two golden chains entwine and burn
The moveless, matchless snow,
And still between the orb-crowned breasts,
My locket-guarded semblance rests
And makes keen sorrow's blow
Eternal.

I cannot sigh—I cannot weep—
I cannot curse the whelming deep
Or blind impassive fate:
But view the earth as one vast grave,
The Sun as Fire's relentless slave
That sleeps at night with mate
Infernal.

I feel my life of life depart
That Death may kill within my heart
Joys ere they bud or blow:
Oh, what a heaven is here to me
Crushed into hopeless misery
Like angel cast below
Forever!

That spirits of the greatest power
Are withered with the the tenderest flower
Which dies in their despite—
That those less earthly suffer worse
Is still the old Promethean curse
Through which we win God's light
Or never.

* * * * *

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Where Eve sleeps 'neath the green-clad turf
The far-off echo of the surf
Calls for its prey again,
But murmuring sea and wild birds' song
Her dream of nothingness prolong
And worlds might shout in vain
To wake her.

The flowers that round her grave have birth
Are all that link me to the earth,—
For, breathing still her breath,
My fainting spirit they revive
With sweetness ever hers alive
Which cannot even in death
Forsake her.

But still the longing burns in me
To solve the strangest mystery
That can the heart appall;
That Nature, Fate, or what you will,
Perfection's dream should thus fulfil,
And then extinguish all
It cherished.

When every thought was pure in truth,
And every feeling fresh in youth,
And all with love aglow—
When every charm was at its height,
And every beauty sweet as bright,
Undimmed by care or woe,
She perished.

Oh, why was earth of Eve bereft
Which scarcely hath an angel left
To open Heaven's door?
Just as the boon began to bless
Why snatch away such loveliness?
Can Heaven rob the poor
So meanly?

Yet came not Eve to me in vain
To give such glimpses of the reign
Of bliss the perfect own:
Perchance, exalted by her love,
My soul may follow hers above,
Now seated near God's throne
Serenely.

Still I hold Nature as deceit
For making life at first so sweet,
To deadly misery run:
Her Ocean is a treacherous friend,
Her Earth a grave from end to end,
Devouring every son,
Like Saturn.

Thanks for the world of soul and mind
Decay and Death can never find
But only free from clod—
For love to wisdom agonized—
For life that Eve immortalized
Of which is found in God
The pattern.

LA PRIMA DONNA.

THE lark, from low and leafy throng,
That sings to Heaven's throne,
And thee we know embodied song
Ere either trills a tone:
Already silent music fills
Thine every grace and wile,
And all the music it distills
Is garnered in thy smile.

What gives day's glory to thine eyes,
Which are as dark as night?
What makes them dart like Death's surprise
Yet thrill as Life's delight?
Why is Joy's self thy willing slave
And Pensiveness as well,
Transported both upon the wave
Of thy melodious spell?

How comes that world of melody
  In beauty small as sweet?
What brings all friends of harmony
  To worship at thy feet?
I'll tell thee where the secret lies
  Of all thou canst and art:
'Tis this: thy soul is in thine eyes,
  Thy music in thy heart.

HEAVEN'S DARLING.

WHAT sweeter is than infancy,
That never lives to die
A double death but just to be
An heir to bliss on high?
Oh, do not weep, as if the rod
Of Judgment struck thee—do not weep,
Fond, faithless mother!
Though soft and fair thy breast
The bosom of the Son of God
Is yet a sweeter rest—
There, there thy lamb in downy sleep
Is cherished by another.

The joys he brought can never die
To memory and love
No more than clouds in yonder sky
Can quench the stars above:

To tell of pleasures innocent
To lure thee from this earthly sphere,
Thy boy was given :
Lest thou shouldst err (oh, sweet excess
Of love !) himself before thee went ;
I marked his cherub loveliness,—
I saw he was a stranger here,—
I knew his home was Heaven !

LOVE'S SCORN.

THOU neither know'st nor canst conceive
The passion thou hast slighted,
Nor can thy trifling mind believe
The heart which thou hast blighted :
Although no hope my soul may bless
And love in vain must languish,
Rather than own thine emptiness,
I still would hug my anguish.

'Tis great to love as I have loved,
Proud am I who have done it ;
If feeling could thy heart have moved,
I know I should have won it :
Nor would I rest, as others may,
With less than I have given ;
I would not creep albeit my way
Led through the gates of Heaven.

Go! love a soul with less of love
And tenderness in loving!
Go! seek a heart more apt to prove
Its lightness by its roving!
Go! wed a mate with feelings warm
Mere sons of clay inherit,
Content to clasp thine earthly form
And think it hath thy spirit!

Ah! well thou didst to shut thy heart
Against my sad entreating,
Lest love like mine to life should start
An echo to its beating;
Ambition then or hate or pelf
Our being could not sever;
I would have stolen thee from *thyself*
And kept thee, too, forever.

THE LAKELET.

IT soothes to watch the lakelet sleep
In lucid purity
And show the treasures of its deep
As free as infancy,—
To mark its finny armies pass,
Like floating hues in liquid glass,
The water's chivalry
In nature's panoply,—
With gold and silver sheathed in sheen,
Entire scale armor, red, blue, green,—
They muster, charge, wheel, gleam in pride,
And smooth as flowing music glide,—
The life, the grace, the beauty of the tide.

Beneath a living canopy
I revel in the scene
Where nature is the luxury
And sun-crowned Summer queen:
Deep in the tide a heaven is spread,
The twin of that which overhead

Stretches eternally
Through blue infinity :—
Like Eden's Eve, whose guileless look
Clung to her image in the brook,
Heaven gazes on its mirrored face
Drowned in the lakelet's fluid space,
With fleecy clouds that pass in stately chase.

An even pebbly path engirds
Three-quarters of the lake,
But where the rills and flitting birds
Their liquid music make,
An emerald and damasked bank
Droops o'er the wave and sedges rank :
A gilded water snake
Has ventured from the brake
Among the lily sisterhood
Whose saint-like beauty crowns the flood :
Their sweetness, chaste as virgin snow
Or souls made white and pure by woe,
Hallows this nook of paradise below.

It is not day but night alone
That makes this spot divine,
For then a magic veil is thrown
O'er every hue and line,
To shadow forms of God-like grace,
The mystic spirits of the place,
Who with the fires combine,
Which through Night's vastness shine
And on the lakelet gaze and burn,—
To make it glory's book and urn :
For in each drop to silver run,
Is told the story of a sun,
Of heaven's thick-clustering millions only one.

THE HEART'S DEFIANCE.

ALONE am I—alone! alone!
In this wide world so single,
No heart dare echo to mine own,
No soul with mine dare mingle;
For I am all alone—bereft
Of joy, of hope, of Heaven;
Alone with Fate relentless left—
Alone to madness driven.

Why make that soul all tenderness
The gods to care deliver?
For gifts that rather curse than bless
Why should we thank the giver?
My life hath been a life of woe,
My kindness my undoing;
If after life no better show
It is not worth the wooing.

Not Nature's self but Destiny
Hath mixed this bitter leaven,
For one there was who might for me
Have made this earth a heaven.
Might? no! she did! till fate bore down,
I lived in her caresses,
Then—worse than all—she crushed a crown
Of thorns on my distresses.

Still will I laugh as I have laughed,
With mirth as wild and cheerless;
Still welcome each successive shaft
With breast as bare and fearless;
Still to the last will hold my own
As rock against the breaker,
And prove myself with my last groan
The image of my Maker.

THE BUDDING COQUETTE.

IF thou hadst seen an infant creep
All carelessly along
An ocean cliff and idly peep
Over its very brink,
(Too innocent to think
Of danger yet, but curious to know
Who sang that endless song,
And what its murmurs lull'd below,)
Thou wouldst, in such a witless elf,
Have seen an image of thyself.

Upon the precipice of life
Thou standest like a child,
And prattlest there of "husband,"—
"wife"—
As if terms such as they
Were made, like toys, for play,

And meant not life or death or destiny!
All recklessly and wild,
As lightning glances, does thine eye
Enkindle flames in many a heart,
When even thou, with all thy art,
But one canst quench. Oh, then forbear
A needless triumph o'er despair!

THE OAK.

MARK yonder oak with mighty arms stretched high
As if they would uplift the lowering sky,
Shaking a hundred hands in every blast
At spirits in their cloud cars riding past!
With what magnificent Titanic grace
It looks the boundless heavens in the face
And nods its towering head toward the earth
As if it had been crowned its king at birth.

Of many a gnarled swell and knotted limb
It makes an organ chanting Nature's hymn,
And in her shrillest and her deepest chords
Sings with expressiveness too deep for words
Of generations that have come and gone
Like shadows of its branches on the lawn,—
Of generations that shall pass away
Ere bows its stately stature to decay.

Doth not its song the ages' story tell,
Talk to thy heart and fill its inmost cell
With Nature's freshness drained by potent roots
From her deep breast into its tender shoots
Till all its leaflets glimmer in their sheen
And dance like fairy myriads on the green?
Drink, soul! the life, the spirit and design
Of yonder oak, for they are wisdom's wine.

Believe that giant hath its soul and speech,
Its lesson of the Infinite to teach.
Stands it not there as God's embodied thought
Breathing the wisdom which its grandeur wrought,
Whispering the secrets which the zephyrs steal,
Or groaning the arcana thunders peal,—
Discoursing, like a sage and prophet too,
Of all Omnipotence hath done and yet shall do?

LOVE'S HORROR.

A HORROR to love I know well,
Too terrible madness to hate,
I am fearful its grimness to tell,
For it bears such resemblence to Hell,
You might think I escaped thro' its gate.

Have you loved? have you loved with the might
Of your heart and your soul and your strength,
Till the charmer grew dearer than sight
Than the dawning of heavenly light
Than the God of your being at length—

Till the glimpsing of her you adored
Till the smiles she sportively cast—
Till the music she lavishly poured—
Till the honey her lips ever stored
Robbed you of your reason at last?

And as soon as your reason was gone,
And your soul clung to life by its love,
To be told that your idol was stone—
That her heart to another had flown,
As readily changed as her glove.

To upbraid her in vain with her fault,
Being cursed with a thousand yourself,
Or to scorn to begin the assault;
And be crushed by what ought to exalt,
For the want of contemptible pelf.

To acknowledge her right and allow
That to wed with a beggar were guilt
Which would deepen the curse of the vow
'Tis her duty to sacrifice now
Though the blood of your spirit be spilt.

All is past. She hath fled from your arms,
Life become a detestable thing—
And you dare not remember her charms
Which your enemy's bosom now warms,
Where you rather a viper would cling!

But in spite of yourself you may dream—
Oh horror! 'tis she! happy pair!
See! her snowy arms beauteously gleam—
Hark! her kisses! my dagger! ha! scream
As I drag you from him by the hair!

To be cast by wild jealousy's force
In a murderer's furious part;—
To be seized at the sight of her corse
With the madness of guilty remorse
And bury the steel in your heart.

To wake with a gasp and a thrill,
With midnight and terror oppressed—
To vow by the Heaven's sweet will,
That had kept you from blood horror still,
In the peace of forgiveness to rest.

OLD.

MY soul has bowed at Beauty's shrine
Before a miracle of fairness,
Who seemed than God scarce less divine,
In delicate exalted rareness:
I melted like the mountain stream,
Which thaws in springtide's glowing brightness,
Beneath her blue eyes' tender beam
And touch of downy gentle lightness:
But then I still was very young,
And half my ecstasy was wrung,
By force of passionate excess
From Fancy's dream of loveliness.

As time passed on my ardor cooled
And Reason took her rightful station
To gently hint I had been fooled
By amorous imagination:

The idol I had placed aloft
And worshipped with fond melancholy
Taught me that beauty proves two oft
The mask of heartlessness and folly ;
For ere the gilding wore away
I found it only common clay,
Inspired by fashion, rank and dress
And love of its own shapeliness.

But I will show you beauty true
That grows in age's wear and shading,
More lovely to the heart and view,
Like angel into heaven fading :
Behold deep in the vale of tears
Where shadows of the grave are frowning,
A form unbent by ninety years
Grand as an oak with snowy crowning :
There is my beauty—woman ne'er
To Reason's sight looked half so fair
As he who four score years and ten
Has lived to bless his fellow men.

The furrowed face, the head of snow,
The gracious glance, the stately motion,
The majesty upon his brow,
Command and merit our devotion;
For every care-wrought shade and line,
Each scar of battle and bereavement,
Is marked by love and thought divine
That burned in all his life's achievement,
To succor want, relieve distress,
With more than woman's tenderness,
To cherish virtue, conquer vice,
And make this earth a paradise.

Behold in this grand veteran
Wisdom and truth and honor's tower!
Grow prouder that you are a man
In whom such goodness may have power
To wear God's shape and do his will
On earth in walk and deeds diurnal
And after death, in heaven fulfill
The ministry of Love Eternal.

What charm can with the wrinkles vie
Which noblest actions sanctify?
Or with a beauty grown sublime,
And lovely in the frost of Time?

I LOVED THEE ONCE.

I LOVED thee once, and still my love
Is stronger far than death
And yet shall find its home above,
And drinks its angel's breath
In kisses sweet as thou canst give,
As thou to me hast given,
Nor shall its joys so briefly live,
But last as long as heaven.

I loved thee once and thou wast then
The semblance of my love,
But thou hast changed thy form again,
And lost that of the dove;
What thou art now I scarce can tell,
And almost fear to write;
Not her I loved and loved so well
No more than dark is light.

My love was blind but now I see
The living with the dead,
Than thou and I, more happily
And truly might be wed:
Then let us sunder every tie
Uniting souls so loth,
And cease to live the conscious lie
That makes a lie of both.

Forgive the error, if thou canst—
Mine anguish hath been fell,—
Remember that thy charms entranced
My reason like a spell:
The form and wit of her I sought
But not her heart hast thou:
What wonder that my soul was caught
And madly loved till now!

ETERNAL SEA.

ETERNAL Sea, whose bosom swells
With love to yonder Queen of Night
Whose silver fire so brightly dwells
Upon thy breast and woos thy might!
How far thou spreadst beyond my sight!
The starry concave rests on thee,
Low bending from the zenith's height
Its mighty arch to kiss the sea.

Whene'er I gaze on thy expanse,
The fullness of my soul is known,
I seem to gather in my glance
A majesty I make my own:
I seat my spirit on a throne,
My sceptre reason I extend,
To call up thoughts to earth unknown
Which with my dreams shall ever blend.

Dread mysteries thy spells enhance,
But beauty o'er thy bosom strays:
And in the moon's pale lightning dance
Is more of love than vestal gaze,
Which, wreathed with surf, in brightness plays
To quicken that ethereal loam,
Embodied once, with purest rays,
In Venus, daughter of thy foam.

Oft listening to thy thundering beat
My ear the voice of God has caught
And as I heard the rush repeat
Link has with link connection wrought
Until chaotic sounds have taught
The meaning of the surging sea
And wakened many a lofty thought
Of what has been and what must be.

I see thy pathways as they led
Some thousand million years ago,
When monsters sported in thy bed,
Too vast for earth again to know,

And speeding past the ages slow
To mortal seraphs in the van,
I see their Edens overgrow
The long-forgotten race of man.

THE WILD ROSE.

I HAVE fainted from perfume in gardens of roses
Where the beauties of Flora are crowded together,
And Eden all hues of their vesture discloses,
Yet I linger around this wild rose in the heather.

It is simple as wild and carelessly nourished
By the sun and the dews and the vagabond breezes,
Unnoted by pilgrims, save one, it has flourished,
Yet more than the cultured my fancy it pleases.

Oh, they may be clad with more richness and
lustre,
Their perfume may sink with more ravish-
ing power,
But ne'er with their leaflets so lovingly cluster
And fold round my heart as this lone desert
flower.

I joy in the thought that the world has ne-
glected
This Queen of the wild and still kept her
so lonely,
While the spirit of freshness her sweetness
attracted
And treasured so purely for me and me
only.

A life may abound with the wealth of sub-
sistence
Yet pine in its depth with soul-famishing
bareness

For the lack of one flower to sweeten existence
With the fragrance and charm of its delicate rareness.

Before I discovered my exquisite treasure
My heart was as barren as Winter's effeteness,
But now, like the springtide, it bounds with the pleasure
Of love-life and music and blossoming sweetness.

THE AMERICAN MOTHER.

A MOTHER had an only son,
As beautiful as dawn,
When rosy light hath just begun
To kiss the dewy lawn,—
With voice as sweet and musical
As birds that sing for love,
And soul as kind and dutiful
As angels are above.

He grew in beauty and in strength,
In courage and in skill,
And had an arm and soul at length
To rescue or to kill.
And when earth's tyrants came to blast,
And thunders 'gan to roll,
Upon her son the mother cast
A look that read his soul.

"I know thy heart and whither rush,
Those lofty thoughts of thine,
And wherefore mounts that haughty blush,
And shall my soul repine?
Go! I would rather die than part
With thee, my beautiful,
Still must I as to me thou art
To God be dutiful."

He hurried to the field and fought
Until the foemen fled,
And never till that moment thought
How fatally he bled:
But soon his dying form reposed
Within his mother's arms,
And soon the solemn coffin closed
Upon his boyish charms.

"Oh, gentle Heavens! ye are just,
And I have naught to blame:
My treasure I may safely trust
To Him from whom it came:

But still my soul does his pursue,
And with it almost died:
Oh, piteous Heaven! take me too!"
And piteous Heaven complied.

THE WOOD NYMPH.

I LOVE this fragrant nutty copse
So rich in hues and shade,—
In vines that climb the dwarf tree tops
And flowers that skirt the glade:
And dearer still is yonder oak
Whose branches sweep the sky
And wind, rain, hail, and thunder's stroke,
A thousand years defy.

For here my nymph supremely reigns
And makes this oak her throne,
And hearkens to the wild birds' strains
That sing her praise alone;
For her the brook its chime awakes
And squirrels play their pranks,
And for the paradise she makes
All creatures breathe her thanks.

Hither she comes, my spirit bride;
I know when she draws nigh,—
The whispering leaves do move aside,
The flowers with envy sigh;
The very air woos tenderly,
Light glows with softer bloom,
Earth's bosom swells with ecstasy,
The Heavens nearer come.

Where waking hopes so fondly please,
Possession is so sweet
That moments seem whole centuries
Of rapture at her feet;
Yet somewhat evil seems delight
That wraps the heart in flame
And carries bliss to such a height
As makes the Heavens tame.

SWEET DEATH.

PALE as a flower, plucked by grim Death,
A maiden lay,
Her bloom and beauty, all but breath,
Had flown away,
And left her eyes, large, wide and blue,
Orbs of pure heaven,
And to her veins of violet hue,
Distinctness given;
Till the close clinging to each bone,
Made her almost a skeleton.

A merry little girl drew nigh
With silver tray,
Heaped up with fruit and flowers high
In disarray,—
Grapes, apples, peaches, roses, plums,
In fullest bloom;
The fragrance which from ripeness comes
Suffused the room;
The maiden gazed, inhaled and sighed,—
Murmuring her bliss, and, smiling, died.

HOME WELCOME.

WHAT shall I love as brightest? beams
From woman's angel eyes?
The starry shine, the golden gleams
That fill the trembling skies?
Stars throb with beauty; suns are kings
That sit on glory's throne;
From woman's eyes the lightning springs
That makes all hearts her own.

Affection's look is worth them all.
From face that speaks the heart;
And I would rather have death's pall
Wrapped round me now than part
With Lona's gentle smile and look
When I world-wearied come,—
Panting—like hart for water-brook—
For love and comfort home.

The light that rushes to her eyes,—
The exclamation sweet,—
So full of love and glad surprise,—
As she bounds to her feet—
With sudden flush and rosy glee,
In dimples and on lips,
Pouting for kisses,—still to me
All brightness else eclipse.

LOVE'S SOLACE.

WHEN Care his thorny net-work spreads,
And obstacles, like Hydra's heads,
Before me throng;
When days in toil and sleeplessly
The nights are spent, I think of thee,
And I am strong.

When blackest seems the frown of Fate
With no asylum from his hate,
Except the grave—
When sinks the heart and terribly
Blanches the cheek,—I think of thee,
And I am brave.

When seems the earth but desert plain,
Where not a flower can bloom again,
For life is spent;
When that and I appear to be
Made all in vain,—I think of thee
And I'm content.

When preys the vulture on the dove,
And hearts are broken that I love,
And God is sad
The work of His own hands to see
Perverting life—I think of thee
And I am glad.

When wrath hath into fury grown,
And Reason from her tranquil throne
Is madly driven,
I think of thee—my passions cease
For love is all the life of peace
And I'm in Heaven.

THE HERO'S SACRIFICE.

UPON the battle-field he lay,
His back to earth, his face to heaven;
Though now he was no more than clay,
His spirit from its temple driven,
Had left a stamp of glory there,
Such as the living cannot wear.

Still sadly on this marble face,
Death's sculpture and his master piece,
The dying thoughts I strive to trace,
Which thronged his soul at its release,
For of their instant fleeting here
Linger the shades of all but fear.

I know he breathed a prayer for thee,
My country, as he gave his life,
Repining at the thought that he
Had not a thousand for the strife,
Waged for the land we idolize
As freest, best beneath the skies.

But softer traces on this brow,
  Relenting lines of gentleness,
To searching eyes as truly show
  The cause of tenderer distress;
A husband's love thrilled keenly here
And mingled with a father's tear.

Yet answered he Death's muster roll
  Calm as the angels round his head
Waiting to waft his noble soul
  To heaven from his bloody bed;
And happy they who die so well
As he who for his country fell.

TWILIGHT.

THE twilight comes like a brunette,
With dusky blush and floating hair,
And starry eyes that pilot night:
But in the growing gloom is set,
A form that rests as soft as air
While melting darkness with its light.

Why should the twilight bring to me
A shape as golden as the sun,
Robed to the waist in wavy rays?
The magic of the hour I see
Which stealing on the heart hath won
The secret treasured for love's gaze.

It is the office of this hour
To station every star on high
And teach the heart to melt and love;
Sweet Peace than Force hath oft more power
And shadows deepest thoughts supply
Unveiling seas of suns above.

THY TYPE:

SONNET—TO A. C.

THE Winter stars are beautiful and white,
And glitter, keen and cold, in diamond air,
And shine like icicles of silver there;
But thou art not like them, dear, though as bright:
Above the golden equatorial belt,
A new-born star—not only seen but felt—
Fresh from the fount divine of love and light—
With all the softness of an angel's will,
With all the warmth of Heaven about it still,
Peerless as sweet — beams kindly from its height
Not only on the vision but the heart,
With sweet and pure persuasion to impart
Beauty to one and to the other love:—
Such, gentle lady, is thy type above.

THE PIRATE'S DARLINGS.

"HOW fragile seems my quiv'ring bark
Upon the mountain motion
And world-wide howling of the dark
Exasperated ocean!
It leaps like madness! does it know
All I hold dearest sleeps below,
And, like a monster, lifts its roar,
Hungry and eager to devour?

"A scourge and terror, I have been
Its harsh and mocking master—
Have cut my path its waves between
To work mankind's disaster:
Upon its rugged back it bore
Who bade it chafe and foam the more,
Drown deep or dash against the sky
The heart that could not fear to die.

"But now that heart hath nursed to life
Blossoms so sweet and tender,
The ridden deep awakes to strife
And sends unto the sender
Defiance back, and, like the wolf,
Yawns wide and wider to engulf
The babes of one who ne'er before
Was weak enough to long for shore."

The thunder rolled like angry beast,
And dragon-like it lightened;
The billows bellowed for their feast:
The pirate's babes grew frightened,
The ship was struck, and soon on fire,—
The children clung unto their sire,
And now they all together sleep
In the dark silence of the deep.

LOVE-HAUNTED.

A SPIRIT haunts me ever. While
I write it stands before me. There
Melts the bland sweetness of its smile:
The sunshine of its golden hair
Floats round it like a glory. Love,
Like a celestial atmosphere,
Broods softly as the holy dove
Upon its bosom rapturously dear.

What is the spirit? Can it be
An angel haunts me? Though as fair,
Yet, mignon, 'tis thyself I see,
Not only here, but everywhere:
Oh, dear delight! we cannot part
For ever present to my sight
I see thee imaged in my heart
Wrapped in the halo of thy hair of light.

LOVE-SCATHED.

CURSE the Fate that severed us!
That tore our hearts asunder!
Mine is shivered like a branch
Rent by the fire of thunder!
Gather the slivers one by one,
And cause the branch to flourish,
Then this heart shall cease to bleed,
And hopes of pleasure nourish.

Blame thee? No! The greatest lies
Do most the truth resemble;
Weak and base to prove thy love,
Seemed Heaven to dissemble:
Like a man deprived of strength
Some frightful torture dreaming—
If I am, I know as well
I am not like my seeming.

Scathless from the bolt art thou,
  Which forced us thus to sever:
Broken—like a vestal's vow—
  My soul is lost forever;
Thine may cling, unite and grow—
  Ay; with another's mingle;
Mine eternally remains
  Cold, ruined, void and single!

THE ROSEBUD OF THE HEATH.

(AFTER GOETHE.)

A BOY spied Rosebud as she grew
Upon her native heath,
And, like a hungry bee, he flew,
The morning beauties of each hue
Into his eager soul he drew,
And drank and drank her breath:
Rosebud, Rosebud, Rosebud red
Rosebud on the heath.

With joy he shouted "I must wring
The Rosebud of the heath?"
The Rosebud answered, "Then I'll sting
To punish your bold fingering,
And to your memory ever cling
And make you weep my death!"
Rosebud, Rosebud, Rosebud red
Rosebud of the heath.

The heartless, heedless urchin wrung
The Rosebud off the heath ;
The Rosebud blanched and blushed and stung
"Woe!" and "Alas!" in vain she sung,
And, weeping, to his tunic hung ;
And sighed herself to death—
While he played, poor Rosebud red
Sighed herself to death.

DOUBLE FAITH.

WHY, star of love, my life bereave
Of the chill midnight of the heart?
Why, tempting Heaven, one moment leave
Thy strict and jealous gates apart?
Why grant my soul such glimpse of bliss,
Then plunge it into the abyss?

What art our bands so softly wove,
That they might be more quickly riven?
Was I clasped to thy breast of love
To be from that to madness driven?
In heaven and rapture lulled asleep
To wake with horror in the deep?

The rose drinks bloom but from the sun,
And love to love must turn forever;
Hadst thou not looked to more than one

Not Death had power our hearts to sever:
But double faith the loving shun—
The noble deem it worse than none.

Thy heart against mine own hath beat;
Oh, had it learned to beat as true!
Thy breath with mine hath mingled sweet;
Oh, had our spirits mingled too!
I would have taught thy soul that truth
Gives love eternal joy and youth.

THE DUSKY BEAUTY.

STRANGE beauty! neither dark nor fair,
Nature disowns thy nameless brown,
Thy mantling cheek, thy midnight hair,
As Europe's blush and Afric's frown.

Thy beauty is a startling thing
Like music in a desert lone,
Or bird of bright but foreign wing
The land before hath never known.

E'en Afric's daughters own thee not;
Proud Europe's daughters thee disclaim;
How cruelly unjust thy lot,
Incarnate loveliness of shame!

I note it in the laugh and sigh
Breaking so wildly from thy lips;
And in thy sad and lustrous eye
Where lightning suffers soft eclipse.

For Afric's sons too delicate,—
For Europe's cursed with Afric's stain,—
Branded, though guiltless of thy fate,
Worse than the oldest murderer Cain.

Oh, neither be too proud nor meek,
Nor take thy love to venal mart,
For Europe's rose is on thy cheek
And Afric's sun within thy heart!

What hope is thine? the brightest—this—
Although thou canst not change thy skin;
Thou still mayst win eternal bliss,
And pure as angel be within.

For thine is an immortal soul
And Christ is thine wherein to trust:
Let Heaven be thy spirit's goal,
For dust of any hue is—dust.

THE FOOD OF LOVE.

(AFTER SHAKESPEARE.)

IF music be the food of love,
Of passion's all absorbing sweep,
In which I breathe and live and move
As naiad in the tropic deep,—
Play on and give me such excess
That if possession may not bless,
This burning tenderness or I
May of the luscious surfeit die,—
Die of love's completeness.

That strain again! was it from Death?
It had a tender dying fall
As if the spirit's parting breath
Answered a hovering angel's call:
It came as gently o'er my ear
As falls a doting mother's tear,
Or breathes the South that northward sets
Upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving sweetness.

WAYWARD LEE.

ART thou the thing thou seemest,
Light as Summer air,
Wild as the dream thou dreamest
False as thou art fair?
Oh, no, no, no, it cannot be
Plain as it seemeth, wilful Lee?

Thou hast a soul of kindness
Kindly as the sun,
But then thy love is blindness,
Loving every one;
At least the love thou gavest me,
Thou grantest many, wanton Lee.

The sternest heart will soften
When by love possessed;
My heart is love and often
Melted on thy breast
In sweet affection—as for thee,
Thou art without one, wicked Lee.

And yet the God above thee,
Gave thee once a heart;
I, too, gave mine to love thee,
Shameless as thou art;
I might have cast it in the sea,
For less the folly, winsome Lee!

LOVE AND WINE.

ANACREONTIC.

OH, give me love and wine and I
Will be as happy as a boy;
Without them joy cannot but die,—
With them there is no death to joy;
Without them both
I would be loth
To live and be earth's mightiest king.

Oh, what were rank or power or wealth
With neither love nor wine to cheer?
Even that sweet possession, health,
Were but a desert, bare and drear,
Without the two
Who rapture woo
And teach the saddest heart to sing.

Then fill the cup with red wine up,
From which my love her nectar sips,
For with the gods I would not sup,
Without pure wine and woman's lips!
Without them both
Life is a sloth,
But with them swift as angels' wing.

The queen of souls is love, true love,
And pure wine is the king of mirth;
They form the bliss of Heaven above,
And make a paradise of earth;
Then fill the cup
With pure wine up
And render life perpetual spring.

THY STAR.

A SERENADE.

THE night is still as yonder orb,
Behind the silver cloud ;
Sweet thoughts of thee my soul absorb,
For thee my heart beats loud ;
And so I take my light guitar
And sing thy charms divine
To that sweet, soft and brilliant star
Whose glance resembles thine.

That star is bright in kindly night
But hides from golden day ;
Thy beauty brightens in the light
And shames Apollo's ray :
In gloom with glories thickly sown,
I sing thy star and thee,
For night and day have never shown
Aught half so dear to me.

THE VIOLET.

I GATHERED by the woodside
A floral coronet
Upon the brow of Cora
In love and sport to set,
But deeper in the forest
Where gloom and grandeur met
I 'spied a perfect beauty,
A lovely violet.

There was a queenly richness
In every glowing hue
Of her empurpled vesture
Of deep and loving blue:
Her fond and soul-like fragrance,
Which pierced the senses through,
Brought Heaven's balm and rapture
To fancy's touch and view.

Although the only flower
  Which nestled in that lair,
I stooped to pluck her sweetness
  To deck my darling's hair,
But thinking of a bosom
  Which would be dark and bare
If robbed of one sole treasure,
  I left her blooming there.

BOLD QUESTIONS.

BY gazing in thine eyes of blue
  Shall I at last divine
Why they keep Heaven's purest hue
  And yet so falsely shine?
Will fate disclose,—to senses drowned
  In honeyed rapture,—why
It lets thy tongue like seraph's sound
  Yet like the ——— lie?

LOVE'S INFATUATION.

SONG.

THOU wandering star of dangerous ray,
Thou siren of my will;
Bright but to lead my soul astray
And only sweet to kill!

Teach me the secret of the art
Which binds my soul to thee,
That I may more than strive to part
From thy dear slavery.

Thou little, winning, wilful one,
I many times forswore;
But could not e'en for Heaven shun
And loved yet more and more!

Once more to burst thy silken chain
With heart and soul I'll try,
But if I find my effort vain,
What can I do but die?

LEFT.

HERE lies the mother,
Stretched on her bier,
Feeling no sorrow,
Knowing no fear;
There lies her baby,
Smiling in sleep:
Which is the happier?
Which should we weep?

She has encountered
Death to all cares;
He has just entered
Life and its snares:
Peace is her portion
Earth cannot show:
Why did the angels
Leave him below?

LOVE'S EXCHANGE.

FOR MUSIC.

I GAVE my heart to thee, pet,
A heart both warm and true;
Then give thy heart to me, pet,
What canst thou want with two?
I would not bereave
But only relieve
Thy bosom's excess.

And fear not the exchange, sweet:
The heart that I resign
From one will never range, sweet,
To others as would thine.
I would not immure
But only make sure
Of something to bless.

THE OREAD.

DAY and night I haunt this mountain,
Climbing and descending,
Drinking at its purest fountain,
With its spirit blending,
For I am its Oread :
Weeks and months deep in the wood
On its mystery I brood,
Grown prophetically sad,
For I know
That while its head to heaven aspires,
Its feet are planted in the fires
Miles below.

While the awe of night still hushes
Springtide's warbled wooing,—
When the star-eyed morn first blushes
At the sun's pursuing,
On the mountain's peak I stand
Drinking in my vision's range
Fresh sublimity from change
O'er the ocean, sky and land,

Which unroll
From darkness into life and light
And fill with Deity my sight,
Heart and soul.

Every star puts out his taper
As the sun approaches;
On the East a lustrous vapor
Steadily encroaches,—
For a god is rising fast:
Crimson vistas fold on fold,—
As he mounts his throne of gold
And Aurora hurries past,—
Burn like ire:
Earth—Ocean wakes,—like maid from trance,
Beneath a lover's eyes that glance
Liquid fire.

Dropping,—like the lark from ether,
Tired of morning's splendors,
Homeward through the clouds beneath her,
Where the Earth engenders,
From her bosom's sweetest sweet
Flowers which ope on me their eyes,
Flushed with sisterly surprise
Kindred purity to greet,

With their breath
And soul of Nature, I refine
To delicacy too divine
E'en for death.

Ne'er a songster has a meaning
Warbled near my arbor, —
Ne'er a life this mountain gleaning
Nestles in its harbor
That I do not understand;
At my fountain's mossy seat
Gold fish come to kiss my feet;
E'en the serpent's eyes look bland
As I pass,
And I on earth have not a foe
But one that still sleeps far below, —
Fire, alas!

Has not life a single portal
Leading not to error?
Is it true that every mortal
Has like me a terror
Robbing her of perfect bliss?
Caves fantastic deep I pierce
Where fire Titans slumber fierce;
With alternate groan and hiss

They foretell
Their day to rise and burst and burn
And my sweet mountain Eden turn
Into hell.

Gold and silver mines exhaustless,
Gems, with darkness sleeping
In earth's bosom, matchless, costless,
Rayless beauty keeping,
I would give to save my home:
Prayer is breath and fate despair:
Sad I roam the starlight air,
'Neath the sun-encrusted dome,
Asking Night
If her far million worlds possess
A single home of happiness
Free from blight.

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